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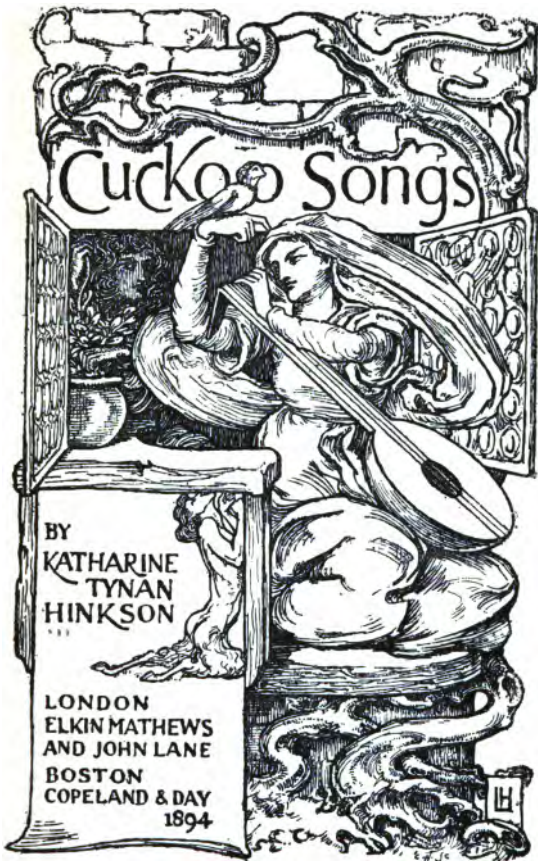




# CUCKOO SONGS



***\*\* Of this Edition 500 copies have been printed for England.***



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1894

MAIN

TO  
MY DEAREST FRIEND  
MY HUSBAND

159255



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## *CUCKOO SONGS*

*I sing of fields we loved of yore,  
Old hills and woods we knew,  
Where oft we heard Spring's voice, asthore,  
Cuckoo! Cuckoo!*

*A small monotonous song I sing,  
My notes are faint and few  
Like his, whose coming wakes the Spring,  
Cuckoo! Cuckoo!*

*I sing my country song again,  
I sing my song of you,  
Like him, to make my meaning plain,  
Cuckoo! Cuckoo!*



*Without him Spring would drop her flowers,  
The sky forget its blue:  
Hail! dearest voice in all the bowers,  
Cuckoo! Cuckoo!*

*Because I make your heart its Spring  
And its full Summer, too :  
My cuckoo songs for you I sing,  
Cuckoo! Cuckoo!*

*You will not do my song more wrong,  
That to your heart rings true,  
Than the Spring does his jubilant song,  
Cuckoo! Cuckoo!*

# CUCKOO SONGS





## CUCKOO SONGS

### *The Resurrection : A Miracle-Play*

#### PROLOGUE

*(Spoken by an ANGEL, before the curtain riseth. He carrieth a golden trumpet, which he soundeth lustily.)*

**G**OOD Christian folk, rejoice this morn  
He is arisen who died forlorn.

*Sing Alleluia,—sing, my horn!*

*Good folk, send heralds to proclaim  
By market-place and square the same  
Great tidings in the Lord His Name!*

*Let mounted heralds spur and ride  
By village street and mountain side,  
Proclaiming He is risen who died!*

*His Mother kneeling at day-dawn,  
Musing that mournful death upon,  
Was 'ware a great light grew and shone.*

*And in the midst thereof He stood,  
The three-days' dead upon the rood.  
His wounds His Father hath made good.*

*His Mother, with great ache of love,  
Leaning to touch Him, saw Him move,  
Floating a little farther off.*

*To her with thrilling voice He spake :  
' I am not risen, but come to slake  
Thy bruised maternal heart's heart-ache.*

*' I am not dead,' He said, ' but live,—  
Thou Mother of men and second Eve,  
Through whom all men new life receive.'*

*Thereat the vision 'gan to fade,  
And grew the morning light instead—  
The Easter world was gold-enrayed.*

*Tantarara ! Go out and shout  
The joyful news the world about,  
This day the fires of hell are out.*

*Fling the good tidings far and near,  
That sea and vale and mountain hear,  
From east to western hemisphere.*

*The earth puts on her cloth of gold,  
The sky her sapphire folds unrolled,  
The spring-day world is blithe and bold.*

*Now hearken to our miracle-play,  
How the dear Christ has risen to-day,  
And Alleluia sing and say,  
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

## SCENE I

*(Time—early dawn. Through the garden's shadows to the sepulchre, come the holy women.)*

## SALOME

Here we bring spice, and balm, and myrrh,  
To wrap Him in the sepulchre,—  
The white death-chamber, stark and drear,  
Where we have laid His head.

## MAGDALENE

My flowers will brighten in the gloom ;  
He is not lonely in the tomb,  
Forgot, while we keep warm at home,  
As are the patient dead.

## MARY

And yet He said : ' Three days, and I,  
Who on the shameful Cross shall die,  
Will rise again beneath the sky.'  
What if He should arise !

*THE RESURRECTION: A MIRACLE PLAY* 7

MAGDALENE

Then blessed dawning that should see  
The stone rolled from His Heart and me.  
And if He said it, this will be,  
Though all the world denies.

SALOME

But who will roll us off the stone?  
We could not, all and everyone:  
The great stone weigheth nigh a ton.  
How shall we entrance win?

MARY

See, the great door is open wide.  
It may be some are gone inside;  
Peter and John, too tearful-eyed  
To sleep while birds begin.

*(They enter the sepulchre. There are the empty cere-cloths, and two ANGELS sitting at head and foot of the slab where the BODY hath lain.)*





## MAGDALENE

O while we slept, the foe hath come  
And rifled this most precious tomb.  
Here is but linen of the loom,  
Wherein He shrouded was.

Kind gentlemen, who now keep guard  
Over His death-place, watch and ward,  
Who were they, cold of heart and hard,  
That stole my Lord ? Alas !

## SALOME

We are but women come with spice,  
And Eastern herbs, and nard of price,  
And linen wrought with fine device,  
To wrap away our Dead.

Do Caiaphas and his tribe pursue  
Our Master, dead and living too,  
And come by stealth at night, and do  
Outrage where He is laid ?

MARY

Hush, Salome. And, Magdalene,  
Weep not so hard ! These gentlemen  
Perhaps will speed us, might and main,  
To where our dead may be.

FIRST ANGEL

Why seek ye here among the dead  
Who lives ? Have ye remembered  
His words, while yet He taught and prayed,  
And healed in Galilee ?

He said : 'The Son of Man must then  
Die on a cross for sins of men,  
But the third day will rise again.'  
See, the third dawn is dim :

Go say to His disciples, He  
Hath risen as He did prophesy,  
And hath departed speedily  
Into Jerusalem.

## CUCKOO SONGS

## SECOND ANGEL

Blessed are ye for love and faith,  
Ye women, who have feared not death,  
Nor chains nor stripes, nor mortal scathe,  
Nor portals of the grave !

## MAGDALENE

Now though ye speak a tongue like ours,  
I know ye, folk from heavenly bowers,  
Seraphim, cherubim, thrones and powers,  
These be your kinsfolk brave.

## SCENE II

*(A garden in the rose and gold of high dawn. Between the flowers goeth MAGDALENE, listlessly.)*

## MAGDALENE

They said, Peter and James and John,  
'Twas but in dreams we looked upon  
Those angels in the faint, sweet dawn,  
And heard their tidings glad.

O if a dream it were, I would  
Go dreaming all my life ; and good  
Never to wake to daylight rude,  
    If such sweet dreams I had.

Yet He is gone, themselves avow ;  
For Peter saw them even now,  
The grave-clothes that from foot to brow  
    Did swathe Him yesternight.

Dear Master, send your messenger.  
My heart is heavy, faint with fear,  
Lest the sweet tidings I did hear  
    I did not hear aright.

*(JESUS cometh up the path ; His glory veiled, He seemeth as  
a gardener.)*

MAGDALENE

Are you the gardener of this place ?  
Kind sir, I cannot see your face,  
Because the tears so quickly race  
    That they have drained me blind.

I am in trouble, sir, or else  
Should say how sweet your garden smells,  
Your musk and Canterbury-bells,  
In this most sweet south wind.

Perhaps, kind sir, you know who hath  
Opened the chamber-door of death  
That's yonder in your garden path,  
And my dear Lord hath ta'en.

*(She weepeth.)*

JESUS

Woman, why dost thou weep?

MAGDALENE

For ruth  
Of my King, murdered in His youth.  
They will not let Him rest in truth  
Even when they have slain,

Tell me where He is gone, that so  
My feet may follow high and low,  
By crags of fire and wastes of snow,  
Seeking Him everywhere.

JESUS

Mary !

MAGDALENE

Rabboni ! as they said  
Come from the dead, come from the dead,  
Living and bright in Thy Godhead,  
And all Thy wounds so fair !

*(Falleth at His feet.)*

JESUS

Touch Me not, till I shall arise  
Unto My Father in the skies.  
Go tell the brethren thine own eyes  
Have seen My living face.

## MAGDALENE

Most blessed day and blessed hour,  
All in a dawn-lit garden bower,  
When Thou hast shown at last Thy power,  
Thy glory and Thy grace !

*(The ANGEL of the golden trumpet speaketh, after the falling of the curtain.)*

*Our play is done ; now everyone  
Safe to his home by set of sun ;  
The Holy Week's great Acts are done.*

*The fasts are over that are Lent's,  
But all good folk keep abstinence  
From sin—yet not from penitence*

*Go, brethren, all in charity,  
For His dear sake who died on tree,  
And is arisen for all of ye.*

*Daughters, take note that first He came  
Unto His Mother without blame,  
Next to a sinner, purged of shame.*

*A Woman brought Him forth, a Maid,  
On whose sweet lap the Babe was laid  
Her foot is on the serpent's head.*

*Woman was last beside the cross,  
And earliest in the garden was.  
Well she atones for Eve's great loss.*

*Yet be not vain, since that would ill  
Repay His love and honour; still  
Meek and obedient to His will,*

*Be virtuous wives and housekeepers;  
Keeping the home as sweet as Hers,  
The first of happy home-builders.*



*Upon Our Lord's Ascension Day  
We give another miracle-play.  
Till then, fare all as well as may!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*The Oak said to the Eagle*

*(From the Irish)*

76 THE Oak said to the Eagle .  
How old art thou ?

Clouds and the sunlight regal  
Are on thy brow.

But the Eagle : Thine age, brother,  
Tell it again.

We are old, both one and the other,  
Past dreams of men.

And the Oak : Mine age hath thriven  
A thousand years,  
'Gainst the winds and the rains of heaven,  
And lightning's spears.

B

I have seen men born and buried,  
How long, how long ?  
The race of the red deer harried,  
That was so strong.

But the Eagle laughed out scornful :  
Thou dost not know  
Thou greybeard, ragged and mournful,  
How youth doth go.

As an eaglet cock I knew thee  
An acorn smooth,  
When the wind from the tree-top blew thee.  
Look at my youth !

Thou that art groaning and hoary  
That Time doth kill,  
Look at me, clouds for my glory,  
An eaglet still !

### *Singing Stars*

**‘WHAT** sawest thou, Orion, thou hunter of  
the star-lands,

On that night star-sown and azure when thou  
cam’st in splendour sweeping,

And amid thy starry brethren from the near lands  
and the far lands

All the night above a stable on the earth thy watch  
wert keeping?’

‘Oh, I saw the stable surely, and the young Child  
and the Mother,

And the placid beasts still gazing with their mild  
eyes full of loving.

And I saw the trembling radiance of the Star, my  
lordliest brother,  
Light the earth and all the heavens as he kept his  
guard unmoving.

' There were kings that came from Eastward with  
their ivory, spice, and sendal,  
With gold fillets in their dark hair, and gold  
brodered robes and stately,  
And the shepherds gazing star-ward, over yonder  
hill did wend all,  
And the silly sheep went meekly, and the wise dog  
marvelled greatly.

' Oh, we knew, we stars, the stable held our King,  
His glory shaded,  
That His baby hands were poising all the spheres  
and constellations ;

Berenice shook her hair down, like a shower of star-  
dust braided,  
And Arcturus, pale as silver, bent his brows in  
adorations.

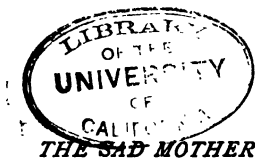
‘The stars sang all together, sang their love-songs  
with the angels,  
With the Cherubim and Seraphim their shrilly  
trumpets blended.  
They have never sung together since that night of  
great evangels,  
And the young Child in the manger, and the time  
of bondage ended.’

### *The Sad Mother*

**O** WHEN the half-light weaves  
Wild shadows on the floor,  
How ghostly come the withered leaves  
Stealing about my door !

I sit and hold my breath,  
Lone in the lonely house;  
Naught breaks the silence still as death,  
Only a creeping mouse.

The patter of leaves, it may be,  
But liker patter of feet,  
The small feet of my own baby  
That never felt the heat.



The small feet of my son,  
Cold as the graveyard sod;  
My little, dumb, unchristened one  
That may not win to God.

'Come in, dear babe,' I cry,  
Opening the door so wide.  
The leaves go stealing softly by ;  
How dark it is outside !

And though I kneel and pray  
Long on the threshold-stone,  
The little feet press on their way,  
And I am ever alone.



### *The Wood-Dove*

**T**HE skies they were leaden, the snowflakes  
were falling;

No blackbird or linnet was courting or calling:

But the wood-dove's soft moaning was heard in  
the distance,

And her song, all of love, came with dulcet  
persistence.

O what though the nests were all flooded with  
water,

And the cold eggs should give them no sweet son  
or daughter,

She was dreamy with pleasure for her true love  
beside her,  
And the day shone as fair as though young leaves  
did hide her.

O Love, moaned the wood-dove, the sweet voice of  
Summer,  
'Twere death, it were madness, were my love a  
roamer.  
But Love, true and faithful, what power has cold  
weather  
To still our sweet songs, Love, since we are together?

Then I to my true love, true love is enough, Love,  
And how wise is the wood-dove who learns that  
lore off, Love;  
'Tis our charm for the winter, when wintry winds  
cry, Love,  
And when in the grave on your heart I shall lie,  
Love.

*The Story of Blessed Columba and  
the Horse*

COLUMBA was kept back  
Four years from his reward,  
The brethren's prayers, alack,  
Prevailing with the Lord.  
'O Children, let me go!'  
'Twas oft and oft he prayed,  
Yet still with prayer aglow  
They held him from the dead.

They held him back with might,  
Kissing his habit's hem,  
His soul's wings set for flight  
Were prisoned long by them.

His soul was sick for death;  
Yea, anguished long and dumb  
To take the lonely path  
Should lead the exile home.

At last one Autumn day  
When woods were red and gold,  
And the sea moaned alway  
For summers dead and cold,  
Columba, weary foot,  
Went out and saw the sheaves,  
And flames of yellow fruit  
Trembling among the leaves.

He saw the sheep and swine,  
The oxen and the ass,  
The drying swathes in line  
Of rich and honeyed grass :  
Opened the granary door,  
And saw the brethren had

Of fruit and grain great store  
To last through winter sad.

Upon a brother's arm  
The great Columba leant;  
Bowed was that stately form,  
The holy head down-bent.  
Yet peace was in his eyes,  
Happy and satisfied:  
He blessed the granaries,  
The beasts and pastures wide.

As slowly home they came,  
There limped along the road,  
The old horse tired and lame,  
That long had borne his load.  
The horse that night and morn  
Drew home the abbey milk,  
Drew home the loads of corn,  
And swathes of grass like silk.

With a low whinnying neigh,  
 He ran full wild and fast,  
 And hid his forehead grey  
 Against Columba's breast,  
 And wept against his neck,  
 Till any heart of stone  
 Were very like to ache,  
 Hearing the creature moan.

' O little horse, so kind,'  
 The dear Columba said;  
 ' How hast thou well divined  
 I should so soon be dead ?  
 Thou wouldst not keep me, *thou*,  
 From glory and from grace  
 And from Queen Mary's brow,  
 And from the Lord God's face !'

But while the horse sobbed on,  
 Columba stroked his mane.

O any heart of stone  
Had ached to see that pain !  
And still as home they went,  
The horse came following yet;  
His head deject and bent,  
His eyes still strained and wet.

The brethren they ran out,  
Columba, speaking then,  
His tender arm about  
His patient friend's grey mane.  
' O kinder is the beast  
That grieves, but lets me go,  
Than ye who keep from rest  
An old man, sad and slow !

' Far kinder is the horse :  
He knows how pastures dim,  
With many a water-course,  
Beckon so sweet to him.

He too is tired and old,  
And knows how sweetly call  
The harps and hymns of gold  
To me this evenfall.

‘Long they have called to me,  
My soul is hungeréd  
The dear Lord God to see,  
With glories round His head.  
Sweet is the thought of rest,  
While all the ages roll,  
In that eternal Breast :  
Yea, lovely to my soul ! ’

They cried then with one voice :  
‘No more we will retard,  
Go, elect soul, rejoice,  
Receive thy great reward !  
And yet forget not there  
Thy little ones who go



Like some sad wayfarer  
When heaven lets out the snow !'

They led the horse away  
Unto his manger brown.  
Three days the sorrel-grey  
Let the big tears fall down.  
Three days the horse did mourn;  
The fourth day-dawn came faint :  
Iona woke forlorn,  
But Heaven received its saint.

## *The Christmas Babe*

**A**LL in the night when sleeping  
I lay in slumber's chain,  
The Christmas Babe came weeping  
Outside my window-pane.  
The Christmas Child whom faithless  
Men turn from their hearthstone—  
My dream was dumb and breathless,  
The Christmas Babe made moan.

The small hands beat impatient  
Upon my close-locked door.  
The small hands they have fashioned  
The world, the stars, and more.  
He heard no sound of coming,  
His cries broke wild and keen,

C

The Christmas Babe went roaming  
For one to take Him in.

A burning bush of splendour  
Enfolds the Christmas Child,  
Like some meek bird and tender  
In gold thorns undefiled.

I listen long to hear Him  
Come crying at my door.  
Voices of night I fear them,  
And He comes by no more.

## *The Red-haired Man's Wife*

*(A Variation)*

THE sky is golden, the fields are blooming, the  
hills are mild,

I go bewailing, all unavailing, that grey-eyed  
child

Whom kindred cruel have sold, dear jewel, to  
wedded life.

The girl, I mean, is my sad heart's queen, and—the  
red-haired man's wife.

I sent a letter unto my sweetheart that long was  
mine,

Grown tired of roaming, that I was coming across  
the brine.

They stole my letter, and far, far better, with sword  
or knife

Have slain my pearl that he wears, the churl—she's  
the red-haired man's wife.

If I came by where she stands so lonely, tender and  
sad,

Then she might follow by hill and hollow her own  
dear lad.

I sail to-night when the moon is bright o'er the  
salt sea's strife,

And I flee to France from the fatal glance of—the  
red-haired man's wife.

The lark and blackbird are singing ever low songs  
of you,

And thrush and starling lament my darling from  
dawn to dew.

Your eyes appealing make wood and shieling with  
danger rife,  
O the pleasant walks and the happy talks with—the  
red-haired man's wife.

But, child and sweetheart, had you withstood them  
till I could come,  
I need not go with my bitter woe o'er the hungry  
foam.  
My hopes are fled, and my parents dead, and on my  
old life  
My back I turn, lest I bring to scorn—the red-haired  
man's wife.

## *An Island Fisherman*

I GROAN as I put out  
My nets on the say,  
To hear the little *girshas* shout,  
Dancin' among the spray.

*Ochone*, the childher pass  
An' lave us to our grief,  
The stranger took my little lass  
At the fall o' the leaf.

Why would you go so fast  
With him you never knew !  
In all the trouble that is past  
I never frowned on you.

The light of my old eyes !  
The comfort o' my heart !  
Waitin' for me your mother lies  
In blessed Innishart.

Her lone grave I keep  
From all the cold world wide,  
But you in life an' death will sleep  
The stranger beside.

*Ochone!* my thoughts are wild;  
But little blame I say;  
An ould man hungerin' for his child,  
Fishin' the livelong day.

You will not run again  
Laughin' to see me land.  
O what was pain an' throuble then,  
Holdin' your little hand ?



Or when your head let fall  
Its soft curls on my breast ?  
Why do the childher grow at all  
To love the stranger best ?

## *Magpie*

**I** LOVE the sweet linnet, the lark, and the thrush,  
And the gold-throated blackbird with a song  
in each bush;

The finch and the robin, I love every one,  
But not the pied magpie that's walking alone.

For whether you're going your sweetheart to meet,  
On business or pleasure, in market or street,  
To church or to chapel, a bad sign it is  
If you meet that one magpie a-taking his ease.

But if it should chance you to see that ill sight,  
First look well around you to left and to right ;  
For if he's companioned, the two are for mirth,  
And three for a wedding and four for a birth.

Yet if he's alone show not wrath to the bird.  
A little politeness, I've heard it averred,  
Will please men and magpies; so throw not a stone,  
But lift your hat kindly, and bow, and pass on.

Bow once, twice and thrice, and the bird, I've  
heard say,

Will return you a curtesy, both merry and gay.  
And this is a charm, sirs, that, well understood,  
Will take away bad luck and bring you the good.

Now all ye sweet lovers, I've told ye my charm  
The magpie's ill-luck to evade and disarm.  
And I wish you in due time two magpies for mirth,  
And three for a wedding and four for a birth.

## *The Widowed House*

(*F. W., Obiit, August 9, 1893*)

WITHIN your house that's widowed Love's  
nest is bitter cold,  
Love goes with drooping pinions, his pulses slow  
and old ;  
Your baby cries all night long for you he never  
knew,  
The dust is over all things: the grave dust over  
you.  
  
Drear day and night go over and yet you never  
come,  
To all that lonely weeping so obdurate and dumb.  
'Twere liker you to hasten, putting the glory by,  
To kiss your love's cold forehead and still your  
baby's cry.

'Twere liker you'd come stealing, a little ghost in  
white,  
To rock a tiny cradle all in the hushed moonlight,  
To whisper to a sleeper till he should dream and  
wake,  
And find the strange new comfort and lose the  
old heart-break.

With you the years go over fleeter than words can  
say,  
And one shall lose her lover but the half-length of  
a day ;  
And one shall lose her baby but 'twixt a sleep and  
sleep.  
The dead are glad in Heaven, the living 'tis that  
weep.

*Brother Ronain of the Birds*

**O**VER the sea-mists and the foam,  
The birds had built their island steady,  
With many a trove of leaf and loam,  
And sprays of coral, ripe and ruddy.

They built it strong, they built it fair,  
Moored to the rocks and time-deriding;  
Thither flocked citizens of air  
To make a city on land abiding.

And some there settled for life because  
Of sea and tempest they were weary.  
The ancients made the equal laws  
For sparrow and eagle in his eyrie.



And there tom-tit and goshawk went  
In equal yoke, like brothers loving ;  
The vulture to the robin leant  
With his old tales of blood and roving.

Never was such a simple land,  
With such a happy buzz of building,  
And twigs and moss for lime and sand,  
And beaks for tools the masons wielding.

And each sang blithely at his task,  
From nightingale to husky starling,  
At the dear house wherein should bask  
That pearl of price his bright-eyed darling.

So all went gaily till each nest  
Was built and ready for occupation,  
And one Spring morn all sang their best  
At morning-song, as was their fashion.

Praising the Lord of sea and sky  
Who kept them all the night from peril,

And gave them love and wings to fly,  
And worms and grubs when earth was sterile.

When one who was a chief of birds,  
Said, 'Brothers, is it meet we marry  
And die like any Pagan hordes,  
With never a priest to bless or bury?'

'It is not meet!' the birds replied :  
'And would some priest of God came fleetly  
Over the sunset and the tide,  
And here would bide to bless us sweetly!'

Then spake a blackbird from the west:  
'In Erin dear that's over the water,  
There is a cleric loves birds best,  
Father and mother, son and daughter.

'When by the sands he walks at morn  
The flight of birds his meek head covers,  
His pocket full of crumbs and corn  
He carries for his feathered lovers.



How many a morn have I that speak  
Picked juicy tit-bits from his fingers;  
And fed, his thanksgiving so meek  
To join the wildest blackbird lingers.

He knows the bird-tongue, every word,  
Knows well our notes of joy and grieving;  
And Ronain singing to the Lord  
Would melt the hardest bird-heart living.'

Thereat, they counsel took, and made  
A raft for human weight and feathered,  
And sailed the wild seas undismayed  
Till by St Mel's the raft was tethered.

And Ronain, reading in his book,  
Was 'ware a cloud fell o'er the letter,  
And heard the myriad wings that shook  
And sweet 'tweet-tweet' of birdly chatter.

Then all the birds swept down on him,  
Fluttering in a wild commotion,

And prayed him for their island dim,  
Far away in the middle ocean.

What dream fell over Ronain then ?  
Or did God's guiding whisper rather  
Bid him go out from haunts of men  
Apostle to the folk of feather ?

Who knows ! The last saw Ronain's face  
Was Brother Aiden, who beheld him  
Down by the rocks, a lonely place  
Where the good brothers walked but seldom.

And Aiden said a cloud of birds  
Was circling round his head and habit,  
Singing so sweet, ' Perchance the Lord's  
Good Will hath rapt him,' said the Abbot.

They searched for him among the rocks,  
Parted the seaweed o'er the shallows,  
And dived in water depths where flocks  
Of cormorants fished the ocean fallows.

D

But never a relic came to light  
Of him, so they at last desisted,  
And prayed that his dear soul so white,  
With Christ the Lord supped joy and rested.

And Ronain, he was with his flock.  
They built his house of shell and wattle  
Against the brown lee of a rock,  
That sheltered him from the wind's battle.

There he abode : but *when* he died—  
I know not. You shall ask some other  
Who hath more learning to decide,  
And if the birds found a new brother

To be their priest. It well may be.  
Ronain still lives, young and unfailing  
In that sweet island over the sea  
Whence never a mariner comes sailing.

*The Only Daughter*

**O** NEW love that I'm going to  
And wonderful and bold love !

Yet not more tender, not more true,  
More faithful than the old love.

The dear love, the old love,

The love as good as gold, Love,

*Ochone*, the love I leave for you !

My father's hand is cold, Love.

They say a mother's love is best :

My mother died long syne, Love,

My father's heart hath made my rest,

And heavy fret is mine, Love,

That I, Love, must leave, Love,

That constant heart to grieve, Love.

*Och wirrasthrue*, Love's empty nest  
Where spiders spin and weave, Love !

Long will my father stand and gaze  
His lonely pastures o'er, Love,  
Ere I come gaily up the ways,  
As many a time before, Love.  
His head, Love, is low, Love,  
And he is old, you know, Love.

*Mavrone*, the love of happy days  
But where you go I go, Love !

### *Aspiration*

THE rarest of honeysuckle is on the hedgetop  
high,

The reddest of rose-red apples swings on the good  
tree's crest;

The gladdest of songs and singers are lost in the  
heart of the sky.

Hark to the lark, and his anthem, -soaring away  
from the nest.

Go higher and higher and higher, the highest is  
ever the best !

Green are the fields of the earth, holy and sweet her  
joys ;

Take and taste, and be glad—as fruit and blossom  
and bird,

But still as an exile, Soul : then hey ! with a singing voice,  
For the stars and sun and sweet heaven, whose  
ultimate height is the Lord !  
Ripe, lovely and glad you shall grow, in the light  
of His face and His word.

*Winter Sunset*

**R** OSES in the sky,  
Roses in the sea ;  
Bowers of scarlet sky-roses,  
Take my heart and me.

God was good to make,  
This December weather,  
All His sky a rose-garden,  
Rose and fire together.

To the East are burning  
Roses in a garden,  
Roses in a rosy field,  
Hesper for their warden.



Yonder to the West  
Roses all a-fire,  
Mirror now some rare splendid  
Rose of their desire.

Pulsing deeper, deeper,  
Waves of fire throb on.  
Never were such red roses  
At sunset or dawn.

Roses on the hills,  
Roses in the hollow,  
Roses on the wet hedges,  
In the shining fallow.

West Wind, blow and blow !  
That has blown ajar  
Gates of God's great rose-garden  
Where His Angels are,

Gathering up the rose-leaves  
For a shower of roses

On the night the Lord Babe  
His sweet eye uncloses.

All the sky is scarlet  
Flaming on the azure.  
O, there's fire in heaven !  
My heart aches with pleasure.

Leagues of rose and scarlet,  
Roses red as blood:  
All the world's a rose-garden.  
God is good, is good.

### *The Dawning of the Day*

**F**ROM your own wife and your babies, was it  
hard to go at last ?

*Mavourneen bawn !* you laboured, and your breath  
came thick and fast,

The sweat was on your forehead, and your eyes  
were far away,

And I knew your soul was travelling at the dawning  
of the day.

It is far far to Glanealy, and far to Wicklow Hill,  
But the place your true heart loved of old your  
true heart loves it still ;

And you could not rest in Heaven if you had not  
said good-bye

To the home you brought your bride to, where you  
heard your first child cry.

That night beside your quiet bed I lay as cold as  
stone,

My lips against your trembling hand, my lips that  
had no moan,

My heart had never a prayer at all and you were  
far away,

Still faring on to Wicklow Hills in the dawning of  
the day.

Did you see the bonny hawthorn where we kissed  
for once and all?

And the stile we used to linger by in the quiet  
evenfall?

When the great gold moon put out the sun.  
*Mavrone*, but you are gone,

And I am in the widow's cloak and here on earth  
alone.

I heard the women whispering that you had far to go,  
You travelled all the winter night; the grey day  
came with snow,

And then your soul returned again with that long  
loving gaze,  
And hearts and lips were close once more as in the  
happy days.

But I break my heart for that long night you  
travelled all alone,  
Yet I'd gladly go that journey if the little ones  
were grown.

O sweet sweet was Glanealy and the love we had of  
yore,  
But sweeter far to lie at rest on your proud heart,  
*asthore.*

*A Plover on Guard*

**O** LITTLE plover still circling over  
Your nest in clover, your house of love,  
Sure none dare harm it and none alarm it  
While you are keeping your watch above.

'Tis she doth love you and well approve you,  
Your little love-bird so grey and sweet;  
If hawk and falcon swept down above you,  
'Tis she would trust you the twain to meet.

Now let me pass, sir, a harmless lass, sir,  
With no designs on your eggs of blue.  
I wish your family both health and wealth, sir,  
And to be as faithful and kind as you.

But not a shadow steals o'er the meadow  
That he will swoop not to drive away;  
The bee in clover and Wind the rover  
He fears mean ill to his love in grey.

The showers so sunny and sweet as honey  
Have power to trouble his anxious breast.  
Now might one purchase for love or money  
That watchful heart and that pleasant nest !

*Ceann Donn Deelish*

**C***EANN donn deelish*, dear brown head,  
Light and sunshine still be near me !  
Life were gone and hope were fled,  
Should my brown head shun and fear me.

Browner than the thrushes are  
When the Springtime makes them busy;  
Browner than the waters clear,  
Where the salmon sails so easy.

Velvet soft and velvet-dark,  
Dear brown head whose hairs have net me  
One sweet nest where care and cark  
Shall not trouble, shall not fret me.



Dear brown head, lie warm and close !  
    Browner than all fur or feather,  
Browner than the rabbit goes  
    When the purple's on the heather.

Lie so still, O dear brown head,  
    Let me comb you and caress you !  
With my bosom for your bed,  
    What shall trouble, what distress you ?

Dear brown head, O dear brown head,  
    Every hair's more dear a treasure  
Than the gold and silver thread  
    Spun by fairies for their pleasure,  
    *Ceann donn deelish*, dear brown head !

*Geoffrey Barron*

*(A Ballad of 1642)*

**G**EOFFREY BARRON of Clonmel  
Dies the traitor's death.

Hark the toll of the death-bell !

*Pray!* the chime saith.

Ireton has set his ring

And the ink is dry

On the warrant that shall bring

Geoffrey Barron to die.

Many an one in Limerick street,

With a pale face

Passes, and with hurrying feet

By the market-place.

**E**

There the scaffold blurs the sun,  
And when noon is high :  
That most shameful hill upon  
Geoffrey Barron shall die.

O were Owen Roe but here  
That's stark in his grave,  
He should smite with sword and spear  
Every crop-ear knave.  
*Ululu!* but Owen's dead !  
And the hour is nigh  
When shall fall the comeliest head,  
For Geoffrey Barron must die.

He stood up a six-foot man  
Strong as an oak :  
Down his neck gold love-locks ran  
On a grass-green cloak.  
Strength and manhood in his smile,  
Laughter in his eye :

Noble, without wile or guile,  
Geoffrey Barron must die.

When they led him to the place  
Where the General stood  
Mid his crop-ears, lank of face,  
Godly men of blood;  
Prayed the dying man, 'A boon:  
Mine own house is nigh,  
Let me rest there till the noon,  
When Geoffrey Barron shall die.'

Clocks had struck three-quarters chime,  
When he went in :  
All the bells rang out noon-time  
With great shock and din,  
When the old house door flew wide,  
And in noon-day's eye,  
All in splendour like a bride,  
Came Geoffrey Barron to die.

Taffeta as white as milk  
    Made all his suit :  
Threads of silver in the silk  
    Trailed like moonlight through't.  
Silver cap and white feather;  
    Stepping proud and high,  
In his shoon of white leather,  
    Came Geoffrey Barron to die.

Then the Roundhead General said,  
    Fingering his sword :  
' Art thou coming to be wed  
    Like a heathen lord ?  
Go ! thy bride the scaffold is,  
    Give her sigh for sigh,  
Breath for breath and kiss for kiss !  
    For Geoffrey Barron must die.'

But he laughed out as he ran  
    Up the black steps :

‘ Never happier bridegroom man  
    With his wife’s lips !  
If for some mortal woman’s sake  
    In silks should go I,  
I shall for Heaven the same pains take :  
    Now Geoffrey Barron must die.

‘ Sweet death,’ he laughed, ‘ that I have wooed  
    On many a stiff field,  
Sweet are the eyes below the hood  
    To my glad eyes revealed !  
Sweet Death that leads me home to Christ,  
    Whose leal man am I !  
And sweet the altar and the priest !  
    Now Geoffrey Barron must die.’

He kissed the cross on his breast,  
    Then smiled with rapt eyes  
As they beheld the vision blest  
    Of Christ in Paradise.

O many die for God and the green !  
But never an one saw I  
Go out with such a bridegroom mien  
As Geoffrey Barron to die !



*A Gardener Sage*

**H**ERE in the garden-bed,  
Hoeing the celery,  
Wonders the Lord has made  
Pass ever before me.  
I saw the young birds build,  
And swallows come and go,  
And summer grow and gild,  
And winter die in snow.

Many a thing I note,  
And store it in my mind,  
For all my ragged coat  
That scarce will stop the wind.  
I light my pipe and draw,  
And, leaning on my spade,



I marvel with much awe  
O'er all the Lord hath made.

Now, here's a curious thing :  
Upon the first of March  
The crow goes house-building  
In the elm and in the larch.  
And be it shine or snow,  
Though many winds carouse,  
That day the artful crow  
Begins to build his house.

But then—the wonder's big!—  
*If Sunday fell that day,*  
*Nor straw, nor scraw, nor twig,*  
*Till Monday would he lay.*  
His black wings to his side,  
He'd drone upon his perch,  
Subdued and holy-eyed  
As though he were at church.

The crow's a gentleman  
Not greatly to my mind,  
He'll steal what seeds he can,  
And all you hide he'll find.  
Yet though he's bully and sneak,  
To small birds bird of prey—  
He counts the days of the week,  
And keeps the Sabbath Day!

## *The Dead Coach*

**A**T night when sick folk wakeful lie,  
I heard the dead coach passing by,  
And heard it passing wild and fleet,  
And knew my time was come not yet.

Click-clack, click-clack, the hoofs went past,  
Who takes the dead coach travels fast,  
On and away through the wild night,  
The dead must rest ere morning light.

If one might follow on its track,  
The coach and horses, midnight black,  
Within should sit a shape of doom  
That beckons one and all to come.

God pity them to-night who wait  
To hear the dead coach at their gate,  
And him who hears, though sense be dim,  
The mournful dead coach stop for him.

He shall go down with a still face,  
And mount the steps and take his place,  
The door be shut, the order said !  
How fast the pace is with the dead !

Click-clack, click-clack, the hour is chill,  
The dead coach climbs the distant hill.  
Now, God, the Father of us all,  
Wipe Thou the widow's tears that fall !

## *Gramachree*

**T**IS I would be flying across the high hills,  
Or tracking, unresting, the amber-clear rills  
That flow to the river and on to the sea : .  
O 'tis fain I'd be following my own Gramachree !

Where'er he is wandering, in France or in Spain,  
The noble fair ladies will turn round again  
For a sight of my true love ; and the tall chevaliers  
May go clanking unheeded their spurs and their  
spears.

Gramachree, with your love-locks still flowing so  
free,  
Your laced coat and doublet, my brave Gramachree,

Your hat with fine feathers, your eyes blue and bold,  
'Tis yourself might be marrying the Queen and her  
gold !

But at home in a valley your true maiden lives :  
O 'tis lonely that valley of mornings and eves,  
With the dove's lonesome crooning, and the wind's  
silken sigh,  
And the voice that will whisper, ' If your true Love  
should die ! '

O come home from the wars, then : there are roses  
for you,  
And a dish of red strawberries gathered in dew,  
A comb of gold honey, and wine of the best,  
And a head of dark ringlets to lie on your breast.

*Sweets*

**T**HE blackbird sang his old refrain,  
*Sweet! sweet!*  
So sweet he sang it over again.

Which word did every thrush repeat :  
*Sweet! sweet!*

The grey spring world was exquisite.

O thrush and blackbird, now refrain !  
*Sweet! sweet!*

Because the sweetness grows to pain.

Ye that go sweeting many a mile,  
*Sweet! sweet!*

Put by your sweeting for a while !

Ye that go sweeting soon and late,

*Sweet ! sweet !*

Peace ! for the sweetness grows too great.

And yet for all my sick-sweet prayer,

*Sweet ! sweet !*

Those little fowl sang lustier.



## *Ivy of Ireland*

*(Charles Stewart Parnell. Obiit., October 6, 1891)*

O'ER many an Irish castle great and hoary,  
The Irish ivy clings,  
That now shall creep about your ruined glory,  
Greater than kings.

And over Round Towers that forget their building,  
The Irish ivy trails;  
And o'er grey fanes that catch the sun's last gilding,  
See the last sails.

And o'er our precious graves, of love undying,  
Stealing, it whispers soft,  
And wraps the patient dead when night is sighing,  
And storms are up aloft.

And so because you were our Tower, our Castle,  
Tall in the landscape grey,  
Though all the lights are out, and over wassail,  
And night usurps the day.

And since—our sorrow!—in the grave you're sleep-  
ing,  
The ivy you shall have,  
Wrapping your towering height in tender keeping,  
Kissing your grave.

The birds shall build, shall build their pleasant  
places  
Under its leaves,  
From whence shall wing their songs to tell your  
praises  
By many eaves.

Like Cashel, or like Muckross, famed in story,  
Your name shall arch the sky

F

Against the sunset and the sunrise glory,  
So mournful and so high.

All your sad splendour shall the ivy cover  
With dew and rain-drops wet,  
And ever greener as the years go over,  
Closer and greener yet.

*The Master of the Roses*

**T**HE Master of the roses  
Lies dead this evenfall.  
The roses, scarlet, gold, and pied,  
Are clustering by the wall.

The Master of the roses  
Was old and bent and grey;  
And but one human heart is left  
To miss him every day.

But the dejected roses,  
Since June hath brought them here,  
Have sorely missed his ancient form,  
His withered face and sere.

For who will save the roses  
When wind and dust will blow ?  
And who will guard in winter  
Their trees from frost and snow ?

And who will cool the roses  
With showers of gentle rain ?  
The roses miss their Master,  
They whisper and complain.

Soft cheek to cheek, the roses  
Wonder and muse and sigh,  
' Where is he gone, sweet sister ?  
We need him, you and I.'

And while they grieve, the roses,  
And while one woman grieves,  
The roses' Master, he is rich  
Under the mould and leaves.

*God's Bird*

NAY, not Thine eagle, Lord,—  
    No golden eagle I,  
That creep half-fainting on the sward  
    And have not wings to fly.

Nor yet thy swallow dear,  
    That, faring home to Thee,  
Looks on the storm and hath no fear  
    And broods above the sea.

Nor yet Thy tender dove,  
    Meek as Thyself, Thou Lamb !  
I would I were the dove, Thy love,  
    And not that thing I am !

But take me in Thy hand  
To be Thy sparrow, then;  
Were two sparrows in Holy Land,  
One farthing bought the twain.

Make me Thy sparrow, then,  
That trembles in Thy hold;  
And who shall pluck me out again  
And cast me in the cold ?

But if I fall at last,  
A thing of little price,  
If Thou one thought on me hast cast  
Lo, then my Paradise !

## *House and Home*

**W**HERE is the house, the house we love?  
By field or river, square or street,

The house our hearts go dreaming of,  
That lonely waits our hurrying feet;  
The house to which we come, we come,  
To make that happy house our home.

Is it under grey London skies?  
Or somewhere hid in fields and trees,  
With gardens where a musk wind sighs,  
Or one brown plot to grow heartsease?  
I know not. Where it stands it holds  
Our secret that the days unfold.

O dear dream-house, for you I store  
A medley of such curious things





As a wise thrush goes counting o'er,  
    Ere the glad moon of songs and wings,  
When a small nest makes all her heaven,  
And a true mate that sings at even.

Up those dim stairs my heart will steal,  
    And quietly through the listening rooms,  
And long in prayerful love will kneel,  
    And in the sweet-aired twilight glooms  
Will set a curtain straight, or chair,  
And dust and order and make fair.

O tarrying Time, hasten, until  
    You light our hearth-fires, dear and warm,  
Set pictures on those walls so chill,  
    And draw our curtains 'gainst the storm,  
And shut us in together, Time,  
In a new world, a happier clime !

Whether our house be new or old  
    We care not; we will drive away

From last year's nest its memories cold,  
And all be gold that once was grey.  
O dear dream-house for which we pray,  
Our feet come slowly up your way !

### *Our Lady of Pity*

**S**HE stands, Our Lady of Pity,  
Over the old church porch,  
Outside the walls of the city;  
The sea creeps up to the church.

She is worn and dim with the weather,  
No Baby is on her breast;  
Her crown is browner than leather,  
Where swallows have made a nest.

Your Lady of marble is rarer,  
Your Lady of silver is fine,  
But Our Lady of Pity is dearer,  
Stained with the rain and brine.

O, lonely she leans for ever,  
Her arms outstretched to take in  
The city with woe and fever,  
The city with want and sin !

Once, the old folk aver it,  
Her hands were clasped on her heart,  
Till the cry of a broken spirit  
Brought them in blessing apart.

Was a young maid wailing and crying  
In her chamber under the moon,  
Of a hurt heart, hurt and undying,  
That must be hid at the noon.

Her cheeks were greyer and greyer,  
Her hands were fevered and dry;  
Her lips would murmur a prayer  
But only fashioned a cry.

She was hurt past human recover,  
With a mortal pain in her side ;  
And she dared not think of her lover,  
Her lover was with his bride.

She said, 'I will out of the city  
Where naught of comfort is found,  
And the kind, kind Lady of Pity  
Will give me staunch for my wound.'

The wind is growing, and blowing  
The snow on her silken head,  
The casements no light are showing,  
For all the folk are in bed.

But she struggles on through the city,  
And out where the surges roar,  
And the lonely Lady of Pity  
Is over the old church door.

She sobs her pitiful story  
To the silent Lady of stone;  
The stars look down in their glory,  
The wind flies by with a moan.

The stars look down in their splendour.  
What marvel then doth betide?  
The Lady of Pity so tender  
Hath opened her arms out wide.

And the heart that hath suffered and striven  
Is filled with a blessed peace.  
'Is this the rapture of Heaven?'  
She cries, in her pain's surcease.

In the wild, wild morning they found her  
Dead as a frozen bird;  
And the snows had drifted around her  
Like the ermine cape of a lord.

And Our Lady of Pity be praised !  
She leant from her place above,  
Her arms outstretched and upraised,  
In tender pity and love.

And so she's leaning for ever,  
Her arms outstretched to take in  
The city, with woe and fever,  
The city, with want and sin.

S. A.

(Died, July 8, 1893)

**Y**OU were like a light  
In your place;  
Fires of love burned bright  
In your face,  
Full of grace.  
You were like a light in your place !

Like a light put out,  
You are flown;  
Night is dark about,  
*Ullagone !*  
Cold as stone.  
Like a light put out you are flown !



## *Comfort*

*(To a Bird)*

**O** *MY blackbird might grow pale,  
Just to hear the nightingale.*

Be not troubled, golden-throat,  
He is singing, far away  
In a country dim, remote,  
Singing twixt the dark and day.

Sleep, sweet, in your house of wattle,  
By your tender mate and true;  
Till 'tis time to call the cattle  
From their dreams in grass and dew.

Should you ask her, she will swear  
There was never a voice like yours,

Nor such coat of silk and fur,  
Nor such bright eyes full of lures.

So sing songs to your brown sweeting,  
Let no cares disturb your rest,  
While below her fond heart beating  
Speckled eggs are in the nest.

You've a house, and a house-mate,  
Feathered daughters and a son;  
So your duty to the State,  
As bird-citizen you have done.

Therefore shall he keep you waking?—  
That brown bird of night, afar,  
Singing songs, divine, heart-breaking,  
Of a bird's love for a star.

*Yet my blackbird might grow pale  
Just to hear the nightingale.*

## *A Young Mother*

*(Frances Wynne)*

**O** LITTLE mother, gone so far,  
Fresh from your baptism of pain;  
Its dews upon your forehead were  
Within your heart its happy gain.

So far that none could track your feet.  
Though one should weep, and yearn, and pray,  
You would not turn a moment, Sweet,  
Back from your high celestial way.

If I might tell you how I loved,  
And hold you once so close and fast,  
And prove you all my love unproved,  
Alack, the happy time is past !

Over is over, dead is dead !

I did not see you while I could,  
Ten days ago I might have said  
Words to bring pleasure in a flood

Staining your dear brown cheeks. O fret,  
O trouble, that I did not come  
And speak and kiss you long, ere yet  
The darkness beckoned, cold and dumb.

But vain the tears. Dear lamb, that lies  
So safe in the Good Shepherd's arms,  
Lifting to him your trustful eyes,  
Undimmed by sorrow or alarms.

Home from all danger and all fear  
He bears His lamb in dusk and dew;  
You to that Shepherd are as dear  
As your own lambkin was to you.

## *A Garden of Olives*

**I** WILL out into my garden to hear the birds  
sing,  
The dawn is green and golden, the night hath taken  
wing ;  
The dews so fresh and fragrant the world to smiles  
will win,—  
I will out into my garden, where many birds begin.

Within my walled garden the morning's like wine,  
With rue and balm of healing, and rose and lily  
fine;  
And in the wide green dawning there's naught of  
soil and sin,—  
I will out into my garden to hear the birds begin.

And through mine olive garden perchance that

One goes,

As in an Easter dawning of sapphire and rose,

With blessed feet still bleeding where bitter nails

went in,—

I will out into my garden, where many birds begin.

O in mine olive garden the ransomed ones sing,

And in mine olive garden the clear waters spring,

With lilies white and golden, and balm of life and

spice ;

And in mine olive garden are bowers of Paradise.

*Colleen Rue*

**A**S I went walking by hill and lea,  
The birds were talking in bower and tree;  
The birds were singing so kind and true,  
And the song they sang was of Colleen Rue.

The doves were preening them in a grove,  
Each grey companion beside its love ;  
The low love-crooning my ear unto  
Did whisper love of the Colleen Rue.

The bee for honey afar will roam,  
Heavy and bonny he flies for home.  
No palest honey the rose can brew,  
Excels the sweets of the Colleen Rue.

Like flax-flowers growing her radiant eyes,  
Like poppies blowing her cheeks' rare dyes;  
Both sun and starlight I'd give them too  
For the proud, kind smile of the Colleen Rue.

But if in Connaught I only were,  
My hand upon it I give and swear,  
Kisses a hundred, not one or two,  
Would win me love of the Colleen Rue.

O while I wander so far away,  
I dream and ponder the live-long day  
On stately bearing and eyes of blue,  
And the deep, deep heart of the Colleen Rue.



*Pot Pourri*

**B**UT in the bleak December,  
One only can remember  
May, sweet May,  
The sweetest name to say.

The one dear syllable  
Beseems her beauty well.  
Alack ! the flight together  
Of brilliant leaf and feather.

One warms one's heart acold,  
Because the year grows old,  
And all her flowers are dying,  
And all her voices sighing.

By the sweet memories  
Of May and sweet increase.  
Sweet are the thoughts of her  
As rose-leaves in a jar !

**H**



*Many of these poems have appeared in the 'National Observer,' 'Good Words,' 'Atalanta,' 'The Sunday Magazine,' 'The Anti-Jacobin,' 'The Ave Maria,' 'Merry England,' and 'The Irish Monthly.' To the Editors of these I am indebted for the permission to reprint them here.*



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